

April 28, 2014 Community Open House - Sedgwick County Extension

Feedback Received (04/30/14)

Attendance - 25 people (plus 4 Committee members and 8 city staff)

Staff Summary of Feedback -

- The established urban core strongly emerged as the top priority area for future infrastructure investment, growth and redevelopment, followed next in ranking by the downtown – the suburbs were ranked third.
- Quality of life infrastructure investments are important to supporting future job and business growth and creating a community where people will want to live.
- Strong support for investment in public transit.

Detailed Responses to Questions -

► **Handout Question: How Best for Wichita to Grow? Rank the following three Wichita growth areas according to which you think best supports the future growth, prosperity and quality of life of our community.**
1=best, 2=second best, 3=third best (24 complete responses)

Rank

1	Established Urban Core	67% best	25% 2 nd best	8% 3 rd best
2	Downtown	20% best	67% 2 nd best	13% 3 rd best
3	Suburbs	13% best	8% 2 nd best	79% 3 rd best

General Thoughts and Comments: (Responses organized by themes)

Growth patterns – urban core

- Need to encourage the development of vacant property in the established urban core
- Provide incentives for redevelopment of vacant buildings and property – focus on growth within the core urban areas
- An established urban core would make it easier to live close to jobs and entertainment. Need to improve USD 259 schools to help attract younger families
- More attention and investment needed in the established urban core
- It is time to invest in the established urban core and spend less in expanding suburban growth
- Investing in the urban core would attract grocery stores and food outlets
- Create incentives to encourage people to live and work in the urban core area
- Encourage infill development in the city core areas
- Use our resources to develop and redevelop in existing urbanized areas – otherwise blight will increase
- Focus on revitalization and redevelopment of the urban core and build within existing undeveloped areas of our current city limits (Scenario #3)
- Prefer Scenario #3

Growth patterns – downtown

- Downtown is vital to create living spaces and cultural opportunities that will attract young people to Wichita
- Downtown and the established urban core need to be addressed concurrently ... let's build a strong community
- Downtown investment needs to continue as a key component of a preferred future growth scenario
- Downtown reinvestment will be necessitated by the quality of life needs/desires of the Millennials (will comprise 50% of the workforce by 2020). Major corporations are starting to move back downtown to increase recruitment success
- Also need to develop entertainment options in the downtown for younger families

Growth patterns – suburbs

- Need to develop the suburbs in order to attract young families/keep them from going out-of-state.
- Slow suburban growth and discontinue the use of specials to finance suburban infrastructure
- Continued suburban growth is not a good use of our resources

Transit

- Prefer a growth scenario that invests in improve bus transportation
- Bus transit is important for our community
- Improved transit is important particularly in downtown and also to support our aging population
- A good bus system would help low-income citizens get around and also get to work
- Greater investment is needed in our public transit system – more and more people will need (due to age and finances) to rely on this to work, shop and go to appointments
- Existing transit system needs to be improved
- A good transit system will positively impact quality of life and economic development in our community
- City and County need to invest in public transit – vital for our economic growth
- Good transit is critical to the future growth/development of our city – both in the downtown area and in regional connections (e.g. airport, etc.)

Quality of Life Investments

- Need to maintain our existing community to keep Wichita a great place to live and work
- Need to challenge ourselves beyond the projected 0.87% annual job growth rate
- Invest in community quality of life improvements to bring people and jobs to our community
- Arts and culture needed to keep people and businesses here
- Must invest in parks to enhance our community quality of life
- Parks and recreation – invest in fewer new parks but make them really great
- Investments in parks and cultural amenities needs to be city-wide
- Use our funds for quality of life improvements
- Without good investments in arts/culture/recreation, we will have nothing in our community to pass on to the next generation
- Quality of life issues are critical to a vibrant city –especially a vibrant arts community
- Invest in arts (visual, music, theatre) to keep people interested in staying here

Other Investments

- Include water conservation and reuse as top elements of the long-term water plan (2 comments)
- Sales tax – use it for growth projects (that way, everyone helps to pay)
- All housing developments should provide sidewalks so people don't have to walk in the streets
- Encourage walking and bicycling – promotes a healthier community
- None of the three scenarios include the development of a high-speed computer network which is critical to attract new industries, jobs and support training and education. Planning and development of this network should be done in conjunction with other infrastructure improvements
- Willing to pay more in sales tax to fix/maintain our current infrastructure
- Prefer sales tax (except on food) to fund infrastructure repairs and investment
- Need to fix, maintain and take care of what we have (2 comments)
- All existing areas within Wichita need to have their infrastructure maintained
- Defer construction of both the NW Bypass and the south bypass
- \$40 million for a new library that is not accessible to the visually impaired is not appropriate (3 identical comments on this)
- Need to increase incentives to recruit and create new jobs
- Need to continually explore public/private partnerships and new sales tax/philanthropy to accomplish key developments (e.g. performing arts, library, convention center) that will further redevelopment of the core and downtown
- Educating people in our community is important to our community's future
- City needs to collaborate with and support WSU's growth/investment plans (e.g. Innovation Center)
- WSU, the Wichita Area Technical College and all other educational resources are under-utilized by the City. Wichita has the potential for composites research, motion picture industry. With our educational and energy resources (wind, solar, biomass, methane), we have growth opportunities in the fields of green architecture, food production, aviation and energy production.

► **Board Question:** *Please list important criteria that you would like elected officials to consider as they make future community infrastructure spending and cost-reduction decisions.*

- Funding sources:
 - sales tax investments focused on long-term water supply and streets
 - tax incentives limited to the downtown core area
 - incentives to fill existing empty buildings with new businesses and residents
 - taking advantage of new funding sources, options and opportunities
- Equally promote job growth and community quality of life
- Improve quality of life and existing infrastructure within the older established urban core (USD 259 area)
- Top three spending priorities on a scale of 1-10 are: safety (8), stability (7), services (4)
- Priority needs to be the established urban core (it will help the most people and fix what we already have)
- Focus future investment in the established (and neglected) urban core area
- Cultural amenities and investments that will attract young professionals
- Promote aggressive job creation and recruitment
- Advance economic development related to social issues/needs (e.g. providing access to healthy foods)

► **Board Question:** *What thoughts and comments do you have? (Responses organized by themes)*

Healthy Food Choices

- Explore development of local food and food systems as a way to stimulate economic development
- Create city/county policies that improve access to healthy food choices for residents
- Encourage vacant lands in the urban core to be utilized for gardens and local food production (healthy food access)

Miscellaneous

- Any additional sales tax should be for specific projects and for a specific period of time (not a slush fund for economic development)
- A super high-speed municipal network is needed in order to support future business growth and educational development.
- Make parking so expensive that more people will be motivated to use public transit
- Support policies and investment that make walking and bicycling a normal mode of transportation
- Support policies that promote water conservation (especially lawn irrigation)
- Thank you for doing a good job serving Wichita
- Good project!